

Assisting Students Who Have Been Bullied: Support for Teachers

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- What is bullying?

According to stopbullying.gov:

- Bullying is unwanted aggressive behavior.
- Criteria common to most definitions of bullying
 - distress
 - repetition
 - intention to harm
 - power inequity (Goldsmid & Howie, 2014).
- Imbalance of power
 - Social Justice Issue
 - Children learn about oppression and intolerance of differences before they learn of the societal issues (Polanin & Vera, 2013)
- Types of bullying
- Verbal Bullying
 - Teasing/taunting
 - Name calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Threats
- Social Bullying
 - Harming someone's reputation or relationships.
- Physical Bullying
 - Harming a person's body and/or possessions
- Cyberbullying
 - Bullying that takes place over digital devices

(stopbullying.gov)

Discussion: What types of bullying do you tend to witness in your classroom?

- Frequency of bullying
- The National Center for Education Statistics indicates that, nationwide, about 22% of students ages 12 – 18 experience bullying.
 - Most of these statistics focus on school related bullying, but bullying can also occur outside of school, in the community, work or at home.
 - These statistics are very similar to the CDC report that indicated that 19% of students in grades 9 – 12 report being bullied at school.
 - Students who receive special educational services are twice as likely to be bullied as students who are typically developing.
 - The percentage of children who are two or more races who report being bullied is higher than children who are White, Black or Asian.
 - According to National Youth Association, 9 out of 10 LGBT students are bullied.
- Children more likely to be bullied
- Are perceived as different from their peers
- Are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
- Are depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem
- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Perceived as socially awkward
- Minority within the group

Discussion: What other characteristics that you would add to this list from your own experience in the classroom?

- Signs a child is being bullied
- Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.
- Some signs that may point to a bullying problem (stopbullying.gov):
 - Unexplainable injuries (this can also signal abuse at home)
 - Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
 - Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares

- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Discussion: What are some other signs that you've seen in your classroom?

- Fear of cafeterias: Cafeteriophobia
- The consequences of bullying
- Depression and anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Self-harm
- Social withdraw
- Poor academic performance
- Victimization
 - Sexual perpetrators report that they look for passive, quiet, troubled, lonely children from single parent or broken homes (Darkness to Light, Risk Factors)
 - Human Trafficking

Take note that this list is very similar to the list of children who are more likely to be bullied.

- Creating that vicious cycle of self abuse
- The consequences of bullying
- These effects can be long-lasting. The risk is greater if the bullying is significant and last over a long period of time, also if the victim lacks adequate social support (Rigby, 2003).
- Olweus (1992) found that boys who had been victimized during middle school were more depressed and had more negative self-concepts a decade later as young adults.

Discussion: What have you observed as consequences or effects of bullying, either in students you have worked with or your own personal experiences?

- Who are these children who are bullied?
- Bullies selectively direct their attacks toward a minority of peers who serve **consistently in the role of victim** (Olweus,1978; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988).
- Personal, peer and family relationships affect the probability of children being bullied by their peers (Perry, Ernest, Hodges & Egan, 2001).

- Children with disabilities (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon, & Davis, 2014).
- Children who are socially isolated/segregated (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon, & Davis, 2014).
- Children who are in minority groups (race, language, gender, sexual orientation) (Polanin & Vera, 2013)

Discussion: What are some common characteristics that you have identified, regarding students who are more likely to be bullied within your school or classroom?

- What do teachers typically do when they observe or know about bullying?
- Burger, Strohmeier, Sprober, Bauman, & Rigby (2015) surveyed the use of intervention strategies teachers would use in a hypothetical bullying episode:
- In order of preference:
 - **Authority based interventions (about 80%)**
 - Working with the bully (non-punitive alternative)
 - Enlisting the help of other adults (parents, counselors, administration)
 - Working with the victims (least popular intervention)
- Many teachers were unsure of whether or how to work with victims of bullying.
- About 60% of the respondents reported that they would apply authority-based interventions toward the bullies without addressing the needs of the victims.

Discussion: Why do you think teachers are unsure of how to work with the victims of bullying?

Which intervention strategies do you tend to use when you notice bullying in your classroom? How do you address the needs of the victims?

- What do we do about the bullies?
- [The School Bully](#)

Discussion: How have you addressed the needs of a child who is a bully?

- The Universal Education Foundation and Bullying Recovery Program
- The Bullying Recovery Project is offered at no cost to the participants, through the Universal Education Foundation, 501 (c) (3), based in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- UEF was founded by Hossca Harrison in 1986.
 - The UEF provides an opportunity for children, adolescents, adults, and family units to explore non-traditional healing techniques and attend educational classes in a non-judgmental atmosphere.
- About our program

- Identification of bullying
- Understand personal history
- Cycles/effects of bullying/abuse
- Influences self-perception
- Concept of self-compassion and how to practice it
- Courage to be different and an individual in a world that does not value individuality
- Overcoming shame
- Nurturing talents
- Teach self-acceptance
- What we learned

Participants have reported:

- Having a limited perception of what bullying was and how it impacted them on an emotional level (especially bullying from teachers or other adults)
- Being able to identify depth of their emotional pain regarding bullying and how their experiences with bullying has influenced other parts of their life, including life choices
- Many struggled with the idea of self compassion/self acceptance

We needed much more time and the support of the adults working with the participants on a regular basis

- **What research tells us works regarding working with the victims of bullying**
- Assertive responding during confrontations with bullies tend to discourage attacks as opposed to aggressive fighting (Perry, Ernest, Hodges & Egan, 2001).
- Adults within schools need to be invested in their students and take a proactive interest in engaging all students in the learning community (Brewer, Brewer & Kulik, 2018)
- Contact Hypothesis: intergroup contact under appropriate conditions can effectively reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members (Schaefer, 2015)
- **What research tells us works regarding working with the victims of bullying**
 - Make you classroom a safe place.
 - Discuss effective communication skills (age-appropriate). Many children and adults don't know how to effectively communicate. We live in the digital age of more screen time than face time.

- Cooperative learning activities such as Jigsaw
- Activities and lessons that increase knowledge and understanding about differences.
- Taking about differences, bringing it out in the open.
 - Ignorance breeds contempt

- **What research tells us works regarding working with the victims of bullying**
- Social and physical integration of children who are considered minorities (race, gender, sexual orientation, ability) (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon & Davis, 2015).
- Teaching strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon & Davis, 2015).

Discussion: What do you do in your classroom (or suggest to regular education teachers) to increase integration of students who may be considered a minority, primarily students with a disability?

- Bullying scenarios
- Get into pairs or groups of three.
- Read your scenario in the group.
- Discuss what you would do as a teacher.

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